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ABSTRACT

The United Nations declared the year 2000 and the decade 2001-2010 as "The Year for Culture and Peace." A culture of peace implies more than a passive and quiescent state due to an absence of war and violence. To attain a culture of peace, people must actively strive toward positive values that enable different cultures and nations to coexist harmoniously. These values are based on fostering knowledge among people that leads to acceptance of pluralism based on understanding of shared and unique aspects of different peoples and cultures. Within the Israeli context this entails striving toward fruitful coexistence between Jews and Arabs, Israelis and Palestinians, as well as between people from different socioeconomic strata and political-ideological convictions. This paper presents, analyzes, and evaluates a unique program that seeks to impart the values of multiculturalism and peace, transcends religious and political boundaries, and bridges cultural, ethnic, and national differences. The program delineated and evaluated was introduced to preservice teachers to train them in awareness of stereotypes and to cope with prejudice toward individuals and groups by modifying conceptual and attitudinal biases. The "Education toward Democracy and Tolerance" workshops conducted by the Chair in Education for Human Values Tolerance and Peace at Bar-Ilan University (Israel) are an adaptation of Anti-Defamation League's "A World of Difference" Program. (Author/BT)

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Education for Coexistence and Peace

The Israeli-Palestinian Case

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Equality, Democracy and Violence: Pluralism through Education,

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The 46th Annual Conference of the Comparative and International Education Society, University of Central Florida, Orlando, 6-9 March 2002

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Education for Coexistence and Peace

The Israeli-Palestinian Case

Abstract

The United Nations have declared the year 2000 and the decade 2001-2010 as "The Year for the Culture of Peace". A "culture of peace" implies more than a passive and quiescent state due to an absence of war and violence. To attain a "culture of peace", one must actively strive toward positive values which enable different cultures and nations to harmoniously coexist. These values are based on fostering knowledge between peoples, which leads to acceptance of pluralism based on understanding of both shared and unique aspects of different peoples and cultures. Within the Israeli context this entails striving towards fruitful coexistence between Jews and Arabs, Israelis and Palestinians, as well as between people from different socioeconomic strata and political – ideological convictions.

The aim of this paper is to present, analyze and evaluate a unique program which aims at imparting the values of multiculturalism and peace, transcending religious and political boundaries and bridge cultural, ethnic and national differences .

Education - Peace

Does education mean education for peace? Not necessarily, but I would argue that without education, no lasting peace is possible.

I assume that all of us will agree on one thing. The state of the world today clearly indicates that we educators, educationists and other professionals involved and in charge of education, have failed in our goals to make our world a world that improves the material well being of all peoples and promotes a peaceful state of existence of all.

What we have now is a world in which social exclusion; alienation, intolerance, violence and war are widespread. Poverty abounds and the division between North and South is growing. Race, ethnicity, gender and religion are the basis for social exclusion, alienation, intolerance and war. There are of course some enclaves of success here and there, but in general, you will agree with me, we whether politicians, policy initiators, decision makers, educationists and educators, have failed in improving the human condition. Thus for example, not only arms or weapons, but also poverty poses a threat to social stability and peaceful coexistence within nations and between nations.

Most recently India's President Narayan in a speech on the occasion of India's 50-th Anniversary (reported in the Herald Tribune, January 26, 2000) warned, "Rich poor gap endangers India's existence" (not Pakistan). Well known studies in the U.S., England and Germany, show that, youth of lower socioeconomic strata are less tolerant and more often engaged in racist incidents. The same is true for marginalized groups who turn to xenophobia.

Social injustice and internal socio-economic and ethnic strife endangers peaceful coexistence of societies, and international peace.

Should the present grave situation of destitute, illiteracy, intolerance and war lead us to despair or hopelessness? Not at all. To the contrary – we should increase our efforts to bring about a just and peaceful coexistence.

When David Livingston's work in Africa became known, a missionary society wrote to him and asked, "Have you found a good road to where you are?" The letter indicated that if Livingston had found a "good road", the missionary society was prepared to send some men (and nomen) to help with his work. Livingston's answer was clear and to the point: "If you have men who will come only over a good road, I don't need your help. I want men who will come if there is no road".

The purpose of this lecture and our panel: "Equality, Democracy and Violence: Pluralism through Education", is to delineate the problems, to point out the promises and importance and to assess the prospects of education for peace. In many respects we all are expected to do groundbreaking work since there are no "good roads" which were already paved and that could lead us to reach our goals in Peace Education. In other cases, where roads exist we should improve them and make them more accessible.

There is a common aphorism, which says: When the Guns are shooting the Muses keep silent. That of course can not be the case with the Muse or "Goddess" responsible of peace education. We should speak up, double our efforts and work harder. And this is true more so at the present sorrow state of events whether in the Middle East or in other parts of the World, from A to Z, from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe including the United States. which no one of us could foresee when this conference was scheduled.

I would like to conclude my introductory remarks with a Rabbinic quote from the Mishna more than 1800 years old (codified in < 200 C.E.). "The world rests on three

pillars: on justice, on truth and on peace.... which are one and the same: for if there is justice, there is truth and if there is truth, there is peace" (I'll come back to this at the end of my talk) .

2001-2010: The International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World.

The United Nations have declared the year 2000 as "The Year for the Culture of Peace," and the years 2001-2010 as the "International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World." A "culture of peace" implies more than a passive and quiescent state due to an absence of war and violence. To attain a culture of peace, one must actively strive toward positive values, which enable different cultures and nations to harmoniously coexist. These values are based on helping the underprivileged, sharing knowledge, and fostering tolerance between peoples. Tolerance, which leads to the establishment of a pluralistic society, requires an understanding of both the shared and unique aspects of different peoples and cultures.

We live in an age saturated with advances in information technology and telecommunications. In this turbulent era of change, people rediscover the need for regional identity as well as the need for values. Stable values provide security in a continually changing world. The dignity of the individual represents a basic value, which serves as a stepping-stone to other values: freedom of speech, freedom from suffering, and tolerance, which is a prerequisite to attaining an enduring peace. Education plays a paramount role in imparting the values of tolerance, multiculturalism and peace to the next generation. Through tolerance, one can strive to transcend religious and political boundaries, and bridge cultural and ethnic differences. Tolerance and pluralism require both knowledge of what people share in common, as well as

understanding of their differences. Without this awareness, there can be no multicultural education, and no peace education.

Challenges Facing Israel

The most outstanding characteristics of the State of Israel is its being an immigrant society comprising immigrants from more than one hundred countries, cultures and languages, and its pluralistic nature.

Israel is an immigrant country which experienced very rapid growth of its population. Immigration accounted for more than 50 percent of the increase in Jewish population of Israel between 1948-1977 and more than 25 percent between 1972-1982. Indeed, Israel's ethnic composition, religious and cultural character, and its socio-economic structure were affected profoundly by the various waves of immigration, both before and after the establishment of the state in 1948. Immigration and its integration (*klitat aliyah*) continue to play an important role on Israel's national agenda.

Thus in 1998 Israel's population was estimated a close to six million (5,940,000) compared to 806,000 in May 1948,when the state of Israel was formally established. In the first decade of independence the growth rate was 8 percent annually, about 2 percent in the 80s and raised to more than 3 percent in the 90s with the waves of immigration from the former USSR. In 1997 Israel's population growth rate was 2.4 percent which is high compared to the growth rate in Europe which is 0 (ZPG) in many European countries and 1 percent in North America. Forty three percent of the growth of Israel's population since statehood stems from immigration.

Another and, of course, related feature of Israel is the pluralistic composition of its society. This pluralism is evident in almost every aspect. Nationality - there is a Jewish

majority (about 82% in 1996) and a non-Jewish, predominantly Arab, minority (about 18% in 1996). The non-Jewish minority is religiously diversified: Moslem, Druze, and Christian. Linguistically - Hebrew and Arabic are both official languages of the state. As a result of national, religious, and linguistic pluralism, separate educational systems emerged: Jewish, Arab, and Druze.

The Jewish majority is also diverse ethnically, religiously, culturally, and educationally. Ethnically -in the sense of country of origin, there is a division between "Orientals" "Easterners" or "Sephardim" (born in African, Asian, and Middle Eastern countries) and "Westerners" or "Ashkenazim" (born in America, Europe, and South Africa (Patai, 1971a: 85-86, 1971b: 864, 1971c: 1019-1020). Religiously - Israeli Jews are divided into "religious", namely, strict observers of Jewish practices and obligations, and "non-religious", namely, non-observers of religious commandments (Mitzvot) in daily life, although they may honor some Jewish customs. Culturally - the different ethnic groups brought with them from their countries of origin different customs, ceremonies, attitudes, values, and ways of life.

Educationally - differences in religious observance caused the development of three Jewish educational subsystems: State Education, State Religious Education, and Independent Education of Agudat Israel - an ultra-orthodox party that maintains its educational system under the category of "non-official recognized schools" of the State Education Law of 1953 (Stanner, 1963).

There have been alternating periods of harmonious cooperation and tension, co-existence and conflict between "Orientals" and "Ashkenazim" on issues of socio-economic equality and cultural identity, as well as between religious and non-religious Jews.

The heterogeneity of the Jewish majority within the Israeli society has raised a dilemma regarding the socio-cultural function of education: should education serve as a "melting pot", namely, assimilate the immigrants into the dominant ruling groups or rather an instrument to encourage social integration within the pluralistic society and encourage

cultural identity of the different groups. These two conflicting attitudes of monoculturalism vs. multiculturalism found expression in different strategies of immigrant absorption (Eisenstadt, 1967, 1975), as well as in educational policy (Iram, 1985, 1992).

The changing nature of immigration to Israel during the past fifty years, since 1948, has made it imperative to change cultural conceptions, strategies of absorption and also modification of educational policies. The educational absorption of immigrants by providing both quality and equality of educational opportunities for all and especially for "under-privileged" groups of immigrant children - Orientals in the 1950s and 1960s, immigrants from Asian republics of the U.S.S.R. (i.e., Georgians) in the 1970s, and Ethiopians in the 1980s - and 90s has been a major concern to politicians, educators, sociologists, political scientists and researchers. Also, the continuous flow of students of extremely diverse backgrounds posed a challenge to the integrity of the educational system, stimulating ideological, conceptual, administrative, pedagogical and curricular changes, and sometimes even radical transformation. The "Ethiopian phase" of educational absorption has raised again the issue of the proper balance between the need to preserve unique lifestyles and religious practices, which are different from those of Oriental and Western Jews, in order not to hinder the adjustment of the Ethiopian immigrants to the Israeli society. This brought to light the need to find right ways and proper means to strengthen the principle of cultural pluralism, which will enable fruitful coexistence between the uniqueness of various groups and the common elements and characteristics of the emerging Israeli society, in addition to fruitful coexistence between the Jewish majority and Arab-Palestinian minority.

The Josef Burg Chair: Educating for Tolerance and Peace in Israel

The Dr. Josef Burg Chair in Education for Human Values, Tolerance and Peace was established in May 1995 at the Bar-Ilan University School of Education.

The Chair has a three-fold mission in three widening circles.

The first is the inner Jewish circle or society, namely bridging the gap between socio-economic and ethnic groups (Sephardim & Ashkenazim) new immigrants and veterans; religious and secular; political right and left.

In the second circle are Jews and Israeli Arabs/Palestinians.

The third - Israelis and Palestinians and the Arab neighboring countries.

The Israeli society is a dynamic mix of religious, cultural, ethnic, economic, social and national influences. Israel is learning to live with and understand these differences while confronting the issue of peace with its neighbors.

Extreme polarization within Israeli society, which intensified as the peace process with its Arab neighbor states progressed, resulted in an urgent need to establish the Chair in Education for Human Values, Tolerance and Peace in 1995, and last year, 2001, it was included among UNESCO'S Chairs in Human Rights, Democracy, Peace and Tolerance.

The long term success of the difficult and fragile peace process between Israelis and Palestinians is dependent in part on the education of the young. It requires new philosophical, sociological, and psychological conceptualization. The future of Israel, and the future of all democratic nations, will be determined by the ability of the next generation to internalize an informed understanding of the meaning of human values, tolerance and peace.

Activities of the Josef Burg Chair

The Chair develops a variety of ways of implementing conflict resolution, based on democratic values of peace and tolerance. The Chair provides educators with research, insight and practical guidance in issues ranging from peace, mutual understanding, and tolerance to absorption of new immigrants, in order to build a strong, healthy and democratic society.

The Chair is responsible for organizing and conducting a wide range of activities:

- Facilitating exchanges between Israeli and international academics through conferences and cooperating with international institutions
- Initiating and supporting research
- Producing and publishing educational and instructional materials for all educational levels
- Conducting tolerance workshops within the School of Education's teacher-training department
- Establishing a data center for research to serve academics and educators in Israel and throughout the world

In order to achieve an environment of peace and tolerance in the Middle East, there is a need to promote inter-religious discussion among the world's largest three monotheistic religions: Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Increased interaction between both Israeli and Palestinian peoples is a prerequisite to establishing an enduring, just and secure peace. Part of this interaction involves rooting out stereotypes and prejudices, which both sides continue to harbor. Educators from both sides meet to discuss the idea of becoming *agents of change* in their respective societies, in order to promote mutual understanding and trust. As part of the training program of *agents of change*, joint education for tolerance workshops are conducted for faculty members and students of Bar-Ilan and Al-Quds (Palestinian) Universities. These workshops enable participants to become familiar with the unique culture of the other side, to become aware of their overt and latent stereotypes, and acquire the attitude and means to cope with prejudice effectively. Thus, enhancing mutual understanding between Palestinians and Israelis.

Indeed one might adopt the Talmudic interpretation of the Biblical verse:

צדק ומשפט ושלום שפטו בשעריכם

Enact judgment of peace and truth within your gates, (Zechariah 8, 16)

Those who seek only judgment of justice won't have peace, and those who want only peace, won't have justice. Only a compromise can achieve both.

Education Towards a "Culture of Peace" - Democracy and Tolerance Program - Workshops

A "Culture of Peace" is expected to stress social relationships and interactions between individuals and groups that reflect such qualities as mutual respect, cooperation, tolerance, and encouraging diversity.

We will conclude this paper by introducing a specific program, which was adapted to teach "a world of difference" in the Israeli society in the wake of heightened socio-economic and political-ideological tension. The program was introduced to pre-service, prospective teachers to train them in awareness of stereotypes and to cope with prejudice towards individuals and groups by modifying conceptual and attitudinal biases.

The "Education Towards Democracy and Tolerance" workshops conducted by the Chair in Education for Human Values Tolerance and Peace at Bar-Ilan University, are the only university-sponsored workshops of their kind in Israel. These workshops are an adaptation of ADL' s "A World of Difference" (AWOD) Program. The focus of these workshops is stereotypes and biases.

The university framework brings with it a number of advantages: the workshops are under academic supervision; were prepared mainly by faculty members experts in educational theory and practice; and can be scientifically monitored as to their effectiveness, both in the immediate and long-term perspectives.

The primary purpose of the workshops, as it developed, was to examine the principles of democracy and tolerance; and, secondarily, to examine how these mesh with Jewish traditional teachings. The workshops not only conducted activity sessions and encouraged introspection as a teaching technique, but also incorporated theoretical study

of educational approaches and `value orientations' to tolerance, group discussion based on selected reading materials, as well as qualitative and quantitative assessment.

The incorporation of Jewish cultural and Jewish religious elements, and in certain workshops also Christian and Muslim religious values introduced by non Jewish students at the workshops, into the curricular materials in the workshops, adds a unique `value' orientation to the new program -- an orientation that is usually absent in other educational activities of this nature.

Workshop Outline:

The workshops aim at finding ways and strategies in reducing interpersonal tensions and inter-group conflicts. The participants in these workshops are pre-service student teachers who represent a diversity of Israeli society, Jews and Arabs, Sepharadim and Ashkenazim, Veterans and Newcomers, religious and secular, political left and right. It is expected that they will become agents of change at their respective schools.

The components of the workshops include self-exploration dealing with stereotypes and prejudices, exploring the cultures of other groups, dealing with tolerance and its relation to Jewish culture and the universal humanistic values. It incorporates both lectures on theories on stereotypes, prejudice and democracy as well as dynamic interaction among its participants and discussions on changes that occur during the meetings.

In order to assess the impact of the workshops on reduction of prejudice and increasing mutual understanding, both qualitative and quantitative assessment is conducted and curricular material is developed.

Rationale:

- The Israeli Society copes with issues relating to its social and cultural character.
- Different identity groups take part in this struggle.

- Opportunities for dialogue among these groups are few, and mainly through the media.
- Stereotypes, though unconscientiously, are prevalent and hinder Dialogue among groups.
- Keen dialogue between individuals (and not only groups) is a necessity and is feasible.

Aims of the Workshops

1. Providing a framework for meetings and personal dialogue between students from diverse groups in the Israeli society.
2. To identify meaningful different identity groups which are useful to the participants in the Workshop.
3. Forming a framework that enables tracing and learning about individual and group stereotypes which exist in each of them.
4. To deepen the awareness of the participants in these workshops to the existence of stereotypes and extremism in our thoughts, behavior and action (the cognitive, affective and behavioral domains).
5. To experience and experiment in effective and open interaction while identifying stereotypes that hinder effective and meaningful interaction.
6. To discuss and analyze the concept and meaning of tolerance on the personal and group level in light of the universal-humanistic values and Jewish/Christian/Moslem tradition.

Structure & Techniques

Each workshop includes:

- 15 participants from different groups of the Israeli society.
- 13 meetings, semi-structured of an hour and half each.
- The group interaction that occurs "here and now" serves as a basis for discussion and analysis.
- Simulation activities.
- Role-playing.
- Small and large group discussions.
- Case studies brought up by students out of their personal experience.

Three main topics are introduced, analyzed and practiced in the workshops:

Identity Unit

Exposes the participants to the social groups which are meaningful to them.

Analyze prevalent attitudes within their group on other groups.

Stereotypes Unit

Practice to identify their own stereotypical thinking on others, and their feelings when others think of them in stereotypes.

Tolerance Unit

Dealt with in the affective domain:

The individual's conception of tolerance, and it's boundaries.

The Workshops Sessions' Curriculum

The following is a brief description of the sessions topics in the workshops.

First Meeting: Personal Identity and Perception Adjustment.

Activities included, name game exercise, revealing associations about stereotypes, expectations and adjustment of expectations, summary -- defining the goals of the course, its structure and work methodology. Filling out an attitude questionnaire.

Second Meeting: The Components of Personal Identity.

Personal identity and its outgrowing stereotypes: Activities included a "getting acquainted" exercise". Establishing identity -- "where do I belong?" Summary -- discussion on the meaning of belonging to a group and relation to "out-group", and biases.

Third Meeting: Stereotypic Thinking.

Stereotypes as vehicle to personal and group communication activities. Theoretical study of stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination.

Fourth Meeting: Examination of the Tendency of having Biases.

Activities included, identifying areas of biases and their expression

Fifth Meeting: Positive and negative aspects of different group identities.

Activities included "walking in the shoes of an observant/secular/Arab/Jewish person". Theoretical discussion about the findings of studies conducted in the past on the subject of observant/secular or Arab/Jewish interactions.

A theoretical and research-oriented component: discussion about the relationship between specific groups and teachers' practice and actual experiences in their classrooms.

Sixth Meeting: Developing a Common Language.

In this session participants in the workshops are expected to reveal their own biases/stereotypes.

Seventh Meeting: Communication as an aid or deterrent for tolerance.

Activities include - modes of discussion and argument, agreeing and disagreeing -- analysis of selective listening techniques and perceptions of argumentation.

Eighth Meeting: External perception of other cultures: Recognizing the "Other". The major activity is an exercise, in Relativism vs. Absolutism.

Cooperation with Palestinian Faculty and Students

The Chair received in 1997/8 – 99/2000 a grant from the US Embassy – Regional Professional and Technical Cooperation Program, to conduct joint workshops on education for human values, tolerance and peace with the Palestinian Al-Quds University. Faculty and students from both universities participated in these workshops to explore modes of cultural attitudes of Israelis and Palestinians as individuals and as members of their respective groups – in order to promote mutual understanding.

Similar workshops were planned to be introduced in Palestinian educational institutes . Since 1998 meetings between faculty members of the Chair and Al-Quds University took place. In these meetings the two teams discussed the nature of the workshops and further cooperation was planned. Joint Seminars for Israeli – Palestinian students took place in 2000. The language in these meetings was Hebrew, Arabic and English.

Curricular materials are developed and will eventually be introduced in the Israeli and Palestinian school systems. These curricula are designed for the Israeli and Palestinian facilitators of the workshops. Other curricula materials are planned to be developed and distributed in Israeli and Palestinian High Schools.

Qualitative and Quantitative Assessment

During the last five years, 32 workshops were held and 580 students participated in them. The workshops were followed both by qualitative and quantitative assessment.

The qualitative assessment (portfolio and feedback activities) of the twelve groups of students that participated during the last two years in these workshops confirmed that it was a meaningful experience for its participants. The students report that it was a personal experience and contributed to their social awareness and sensitivity. During feedback sessions and in their summary papers (portfolio), students reported that they have learned to identify their personal patterns of thought, which is in a categorical form when applied to certain groups (bias). Statements such as: "I have learnt that when I encounter a very different person, I don't give him and myself a chance to get acquainted or to get to know each other, and that leaves me with a feeling of deprivation".

The participants in these workshops report also on its social contribution. About eighty percent of the participants report that they were gratified by the opportunity of the workshop to get to know more closely groups of people that they have never had a chance to communicate with.

Typical statements such as: "the workshop provided an opportunity to meet people from different walks of life which I would not dare to talk to before", were expressed frequently. These statements applied to different segments within the Jewish student population such as: religious - non-religious; less so but still in existence - Easterners (Sephardic) and Westerners (Ashkenazi) veterans and newcomers (immigrants from the former Soviet Union Republics and more so toward Ethiopian immigrants); Jews and Arab Israelis, Israelis and Palestinians.

Following the quantitative and qualitative studies and based on its findings we are planning to conduct an intercultural study of attitudes of American, Australian, Israeli, German and Palestinian students in teacher pre-service training programs toward cultural differences.

Conclusions

The Chair's overall aim is to help a new generation build a tolerant society by respecting the rights of individuals and groups, and thus contributing to the greater good. The future of Israel, and for that matter, the future of all democratic societies, will be determined by the ability of the next generation to internalize an informed understanding of the meaning of human values, tolerance and peace, as well as intercultural and geopolitical coexistence. The experience and findings generated by this project may benefit both the Israeli and Palestinian societies, as well as other societies, in coping with animosity resulting from diversity and continuous conflict.

Education towards pluralism, tolerance and peace in diverse, multicultural and multiethnic societies requires two conditions: Knowledge of the common and understanding of the differences.
Without the knowledge of the common there is not and cannot be pluralism. Without understanding of the differences, there will not be pluralism. We share common values even through they come from different religious-cultural sources.

All of us know the mythical Greek Sisyphus. I dare to think that if Sisyphus was alive in these days, Zeus would condemn him to heave the rock of peace up the steep hill . But is it a curse or rather a blessing? Following Albert Camus' Le Mythe de Sisyphe, I would suggest to accept his interpretation that it is a blessing, representing

human relentless drive to improve the human condition, and in our case – through peace education.

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